



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Leicester

**For reporting year
1 February 2022 – 31 January 2023**

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Introductory sections 1 - 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Leicester is a local male adult prison with reception and resettlement functions, and serves the courts of Leicester and Leicestershire. Of the prison population, 98% are local to the county of Leicestershire.¹

HMP Leicester is a Victorian prison built in 1874, behind a gatehouse dating from 1825, and it occupies a site of three acres, close to Leicester city centre. A visits hall and administration accommodation were added in 1990. The main residential unit is a long rectangular cell block with four galleried landings. Usually, two prisoners share a cell.

To facilitate fire safety improvement works, there was a reduction in operational capacity during the early part of 2022 to 280 and one half-wing was closed in rotation. From September, with the work on the wing completed, operational capacity reverted to 350. There are separate areas on the main wing for the care and separation unit (CSU) housing segregated prisoners, and the My Recovery unit (MRU) delivering substance misuse recovery services.

About 26 vulnerable prisoners continue to be housed in the Welford unit, which is in a separate building, with a dedicated small exercise area. The healthcare facility occupies the ground floor. There is one main outdoor exercise area.

Other buildings on site include those housing reception, the offender management unit (OMU), resettlement services, learning and skills, a workshop, the gym, the multi-faith room, the chaplaincy, the IMB office and legal visits.

Service providers in 2022:

Healthcare – Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, commissioned by NHS England (Midlands and East)

Dental care – Time for Teeth, commissioned by NHS England

Integrated drug and alcohol treatment services (IDTS) Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Education and skills – PeoplePlus

Library services – Leicestershire County Council (LCC)

Probation services – East Midlands Region

Escort contractor – GEOAmey

Catering suppliers – Bidfood

Maintenance – Amey

Family engagement – Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust)

¹ Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting, but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

The Board was fully supported in its work by the establishment during the reporting year and continued to deliver face-to-face monitoring during the whole of 2022, despite Covid-19 outbreaks in the prison in the earlier part of the year.

3.2 Main judgements

The prison is well led by an energetic Governor and senior management team who strive to provide a good service within the restrictions of old, unsuitable buildings, which will continue to need considerable investment to ensure an acceptable standard of living conditions.

How safe is the prison?

The IMB judges that HMP Leicester remains relatively safe. Leadership of safety is strong (see section 4) and well-coordinated through the weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM), demonstrating a firm understanding of the risks and issues through good use of data, action planning and quality assurance of safety procedures. There continues to be a downward trend in the proportion of prisoners self-harming and the number of incidents (4.2). As the regime has opened up, the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults has remained stable and the number of assaults on staff has reduced considerably (4.3). The large majority of prisoners say that they feel safe.

Use of force has continued to decrease and appears to be proportionate (4.4). There has been good use of intelligence to find illicit items (4.5), however there has been a concerning increase in the number of mobile phones discovered and a recent increase in the number of prisoners under the influence of illegal substances.

Reception facilities have improved, however, there is often a shortage of essential kit for new arrivals, and induction is inconsistent and requires improvement, especially for vulnerable prisoners (4.1).

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

The IMB judges that prisoners are generally treated with fairness and respect. The standard of cleanliness is reasonable; however, the programme of cell refurbishment has stalled due to the pressure of the prison population (5.1.1). Further capital investment is required and there is a threat to the continued use of the gym due to water leaks. (5.1.2). The quality of food is reasonable, though the budget is becoming increasingly stretched (5.1.3). The subterranean environment of the care and separation unit, although poor, has been improved, and the staff provide good care (5.2.1). The number of instances of segregation has reduced; however, four men awaiting transfer to psychiatric hospitals were held there for extended periods (5.2.2).

Most prisoners responding to surveys say that staff treat them with respect, and they can turn to them for help (5.3.1). There has been considerable turnover of staff, and though the prison now has a full complement, half of main grade prison officers are serving their apprenticeship (5.3.2). The low number of key working hours has been due to staff shortages (5.3.3). Although the number of prisoner complaints has increased, the responses have been generally good (5.7).

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

The IMB judges that most prisoners' health and wellbeing needs are met reasonably well, in the impoverished environment of an ageing prison with limited facilities. Provision of physical health care (6.2) and mental health care (6.3) are generally good, although there are a number of vacancies covered by agency staff. Services for substance misusers require improvement, and the therapeutic community has yet to develop (6.6). Delays for prisoners accepted and awaiting a bed in a secure psychiatric facility have increased, and segregating them to manage them safely in a prison setting could be considered inhumane treatment (6.3.1). Time out of cell during the week is reasonable for those engaged in activity, though it has been significantly reduced on some weekends due to staff shortages (6.5.1). The gym remains a vital and popular resource, though its equipment is ageing (6.5.2).

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

Provision of education and resettlement planning has improved with the removal of Covid-19 restrictions. However, attendance at education remains below target and some men's learning and release plans are disrupted by transfer to other prisons near to their time of release (7.1). The range of vocational courses is increasing and links with employers are developing. However, the range of work available in the workshops is poor and does not prepare men for employment (7.2). A significant number of men are now on remand for an excessive period awaiting trial (7.3). Arrangements for social visits and other family contacts are good, though the contract with Pact needs improving (7.4). Resettlement planning is developing strongly, however the proportion released homeless is too high and stops some men taking up offers of employment, and the promised finance, benefit and debt service is not yet in place. (7.5).

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

The transfer of seriously mentally ill prisoners

The Board has again to report that some prisoners experienced very long waits for transfer to secure hospital accommodation (6.3.1). Although there were fewer prisoners in the gatekeeping system in 2022 than 2021, the average waiting time for transfer to specialist units increased significantly.

Is the minister satisfied that there are sufficient secure hospital places to cope promptly with the demand?

The increasing number of prisoners waiting for court hearings

The Board is again concerned about the growing numbers of men waiting too long for court hearings. The number of men who have exceeded the custody time limit on remand has increased from 12 in October 2021 to 66 in January 2023 (7.3). This continues to compromise Leicester's designated 45% resettlement function.

Is the minister able to work with colleagues in the criminal justice system to address this situation?

Men leaving prison without accommodation

In 2022, 40% of men were released from HMP Leicester without accommodation to go to (7.5).

What plans does the minister have to commission short-term accommodation services for prisoners released in the East Midlands?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Need for significant capital investment

The gym is one of the most important and popular resources in this ageing prison, which has limited other opportunities for men to engage in constructive activity. Its continued viability is threatened by a leaking roof and bowing floor, and much of the equipment is old and requires replacement. (6.5.2)

Can funds be found for repair of the fabric of the building and replacement of equipment?

Finance, benefit, and debt services

The Board was advised last year that provision would be made in 2022 for finance, benefit and debt services as part of prisoners' resettlement through a commissioned rehabilitative services contract, however this is still not in place (7.5).

When will a finance, benefit and debt service be available in HMP Leicester?

Poor conditions of many cells

The Board has noted that the programme to address the very poor condition of many cells, which need redecoration and refurbishment, has ceased due to pressure on accommodation (5.1.1).

Can the Prison Service free up one or two cells at a time for this programme to recommence?

TO THE GOVERNOR

Prisoner induction

The Board notes that the induction process has been inconsistent, particularly for vulnerable prisoners (4.1.2).

How will the governor ensure that the induction of new prisoners is of a consistently high quality?

Substance misuse services

Therapeutic services for substance misusers are underdeveloped and the 'my recovery unit' is not operating as intended (6.6).

What plans does the governor have for working with the healthcare provider to ensure a full range of services are available for those who wish to reduce or cease their substance misuse?

Key working

The amount of key working undertaken with prisoners has been significantly reduced due to staff shortages (5.3.3).

How will the governor ensure that high quality key working will be restored as the prison returns to full staffing levels?

3.4 Progress since the last report

| Issue raised | Progress |
|--|--|
| The length of time it takes to transfer seriously mentally ill prisoners to a psychiatric hospital | There are still long delays for prisoners accepted for secure hospital transfer before a secure bed becomes available. This is most concerning for those being held in segregated conditions. |
| The number of prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP). | At the end of the year there was only one prisoner sentenced to IPP at HMP Leicester. |
| The adequacy of the new arrangements for resettlement services for sentenced and remand prisoners. | The resettlement team is being expanded, however, the number of men released with no fixed accommodation remains too high. |
| The increasing number of prisoners waiting for court hearings. | The number of prisoners on remand awaiting sentence for more than 238 days has increased from 12 in 2022 to 66 this year. |
| The performance of Amey Commercial. | There have been fewer significant capital projects this year and no concerns have come to our attention. |
| Reintroduction of key working and staff recruitment and retention | Although the prison will have a full complement of officers when all the new recruits are trained, the delivery of key working during the year has averaged just 22% of expected hours due to staff shortages. |
| The installation of in-cell information technology including the virtual campus. | This is currently not available to prisoners in their cells; however, it is available in education and the library. |

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

Safety remained a high priority in the establishment. There was good leadership, and a fully staffed hardworking team who liaised well with all prison departments.

The weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM) continued throughout the year and was the focus for the multidisciplinary discussion of about 45 prisoners on each occasion, including those held in the care and separation unit (CSU), those on assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents or violence management interventions, cell sharing risk assessments, and safeguarding and adult social care issues, with an updating of the management plan for each individual. The meeting continued to benefit from the regular attendance of a psychologist, who interviewed prisoners and prepared 'Know your prisoner' reports detailing their background and behavioural problems, and suggesting management strategies for the benefit of the relevant wing staff.

There continued to be very good data collection, and its presentation and discussion at all the various regular meetings of the whole function. There was a strong focus on investigation of trends and anomalies, and the reasons for incidents rather than just a factual description, and this led to effective action planning. Equalities data was also embedded in the analysis.

A robust programme of quality assurance of procedures and documentation was in place, performed by senior managers with feedback to individuals and to the whole establishment as appropriate. Extra staff training was organised as required.

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 *First night*

The reception area has seen material improvements and is now more welcoming. There have at times been problems in sourcing sufficient kit for new arrivals, with not enough duvets to allow each man to have one. A decency pack of toiletries is made available to those who need them, though there have been shortages of some items on occasions. Hourly checks are kept on new arrivals for the first 24 hours and an induction passport is in place to evidence that the induction process has been completed.

4.1.2 *Induction unit*

Time out of cell is limited on the induction unit to 2.5 hours a day. Formal information giving sessions should take place on the education unit, delivered by a prison officer and a peer mentor. However, there have been occasions when these have not occurred due to staff shortages and some prisoners have missed out, making it more difficult for them to understand how the prison operates. The local approach is for vulnerable prisoners to receive this information at their door, which is insufficient. Due to lack of capacity in the vulnerable prisoners wing, numbers of these prisoners stay for longer periods on the induction unit. Whilst this is not ideal, they are offered

opportunities to go to the vulnerable prisoners unit on a daily basis, but they do not at present receive their induction sessions there. The prison identified the need to review its induction packs and communication to reflect the diverse prisoner population.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 Self-harm and constant watch

There were fewer episodes of self-harm during 2022: 226 compared with 272 in 2021 and 455 in 2020. On average each month about 3% of the population was actively self-harming, and about 15% had self-harmed in the past. A few prisoners were prolific in this behaviour. Most commonly, white men between 21 and 34 years of age were involved, and most often injuries were the result of cutting, usually superficial or the opening of old wounds. All self-harming prisoners and those at risk were managed by the ACCT process, and those prisoners showing manipulative and goal-orientated behaviour were encouraged to engage with an individual management plan, setting clear boundaries for entitlements, which staff aimed to deliver in a consistent manner.

There were no incidents classed as serious self-harm or near-miss, but there were eight attendances at the accident and emergency department and one overnight stay in hospital, compared with five and two in 2021.

Razor blades featured in 111 episodes. The Board welcomed the issue of electric shavers to replace wet shavers for all prisoners at the end of the reporting year as part of a national pilot project, and will monitor the effectiveness of this change.

During 2022, there were 24 episodes of constant supervision involving 16 individual prisoners, compared with 40 episodes and 28 individuals in 2021. Sixteen episodes lasted fewer than 14 days, and five between 15 and 30 days, but the situation was more prolonged for three very troubled individuals. The Board commended the whole prison approach and the supportive teamwork which kept all these individuals safe.

4.2.2 The ACCT process

A total of 195 ACCT documents was opened in 2022, compared with 254 in 2021. The number opened in reception or during the early days in custody was 90, 46% of the total, compared with 87 and 34% in 2021. Of the total, sentence-related reasons were cited in 51 cases (59 in 2021), unhappiness with the regime in 26 (31), and poor mental health in 14 (22). The number of ACCTs open on any day in 2022 varied between five and 19, with a monthly average of 10 (range seven – 13). Providing the necessary support for these troubled individuals continued to be challenging and, at times, very resource-intensive.

A robust quality assurance programme is in place, with every ACCT document checked daily by the case coordinator, and each review meeting with the prisoner checked by a manager. Feedback is given to individuals about omissions or poor entries, and the overall findings are discussed at the safer custody meeting, with trends highlighted for action, and refresher training is regularly offered to staff.

From mid-2022, the weekly DistrACCTion group was able to resume. This was run by the chaplaincy team with supporting volunteers, and it offered an hour of low-pressure social time away from the main wing for prisoners on open ACCT

documents and those self-isolating or judged to be coping less well, identified through the safety intervention meeting. It was attended by up to 10 prisoners each week and was a valuable additional support.

A dedicated safer custody telephone line is available for members of the public who are concerned about a prisoner's welfare. These calls are properly logged and promptly followed up by a check with the prisoner, and appropriate action is taken.

4.2.3 Deaths in custody

There have been no deaths in custody this year. However, the Board is sorry to report the deaths in the community of two prisoners shortly after release from HMP Leicester, one after two days and the other after five days. Inquests are awaited.

4.2.4 Listeners

The Listeners are a group of volunteer prisoners, selected, trained and supported by the Samaritans and by safer custody staff. They offer confidential support to prisoners in emotional distress and crisis, and are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Their number fell from seven in February to three in summer, because of prisoner transfers, but a continuous service was maintained through goodwill. A training course for eight new volunteers was held in June, and a further course was in progress at the end of the reporting year.

During 2022, 77 Listener interviews were facilitated, compared with 42 in 2021, and the Listeners made themselves available on the landings. From August, one Listener was located in reception and one on the induction unit to support prisoners in the early days of custody.

After the installation of in-cell telephony in May 2021, there had been 1,619 Freephone calls to 40 various agencies and advice organisations by the end of the year: 1,277 were to the Samaritans, for a total of 8,236 minutes. For the full year 2022, 2,893 of the 3,622 Freephone calls were made to the Samaritans, totalling 14,815 minutes.

The Samaritans have been a very valuable support for Leicester prisoners during 2022.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The total number of violent incidents in 2022 was similar to 2021, and staff continued to face challenging behaviour from a few individuals.

With the lifting of Covid restrictions, more prisoners were unlocked at the same time, and there was more opportunity for violence. Prisoner conflicts were usually related to outside issues, gang membership or debt. There were 29 fights, compared with 12 in 2021. The number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, however, was the same, at 49, most involving punches to the face and head. In 2022, seven were serious, with three prisoners attending the accident and emergency department, compared with 2021, when seven were serious, with one prisoner receiving treatment from paramedics and four attending the accident and emergency department. Victims were offered referral to the police and support as appropriate.

The IMB is pleased to report that the number of assaults on staff was lower than the previous year. During 2022, there were 38 episodes, of which five were serious. This compared with 63 episodes and seven serious in 2021.

There were 12 episodes of fire-setting during 2022, of which 11 were attended by the fire service, compared with 12 and five in 2021.

| Violence | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total incidents | 1258 | 957 | 849 | 849 |
| Assault on prisoner | 133 | 53 | 49 | 49 |
| Fights | 47 | 14 | 12 | 29 |
| Assault on staff | 103 | 54 | 63 | 38 |
| Damage | 300 | 205 | 147 | 172 |
| Threatening/abusive behaviour | 336 | 132 | 132 | 86 |

(Locally collected data)

Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) were used during 2022 to identify prisoners who posed a risk to themselves or others. Forty plans were opened during 2022, compared with 30 in 2021 and 50 in 2020.

The Timewise violence reduction programme remained suspended during 2022. However, a member of the chaplaincy continued to offer all prisoners on CSIP the opportunity to study 'Facing up to Conflict, a six-week distance-learning course available through the Alternatives to Violence Project Britain, accredited by HMPPS (PSO 4050). During 2022, 12 men signed up and three completed, with others continuing their study on transfer. The course is now more widely advertised, including in the induction process, and this has encouraged applicants.

Enhanced support services were introduced in December 2022. A dedicated team consisting of a prison officer, psychologist and mental health nurse has been appointed to work with prisoners exhibiting violent behaviour who also have mental health and complex needs. Unfortunately, central funding for this promising initiative has recently been withdrawn.

4.3.1 Feeling safe

IMB members continued to feel safe when visiting the establishment. One in five prisoners who responded to an HMI Prisons survey felt unsafe at the time of the inspection; those with mental health issues were significantly more negative.

4.4 Use of force

In 2022, force was used on 315 occasions, compared with 365 in 2021, 395 in 2020 and 544 in 2019. Force used was typically low level, such as guided arm holds to counter threatening behaviour, but there was also prompt higher level intervention to contain incidents of violence or vandalism. Twenty-three of the episodes were planned, compared with 47 in 2021, and were usually in order to move a prisoner to segregation or to facilitate transfer, and on most occasions prisoners behaved compliantly. Every prisoner subjected to the use of force was seen the same day by healthcare staff and by the duty governor.

PAVA incapacitant spray was used on two occasions, with no harm reported by the prisoners.

The Board was able to monitor in person one meeting of the monthly use of force committee during 2022, and received all minutes. All incidents were discussed and several cases reviewed in detail, including the viewing of CCTV body-worn camera footage for unplanned episodes and handheld camera recordings for planned interventions. Missed opportunities for de-escalation or poor recording of incidents were fed back to named individuals, and guidance and training offered.

Of nine comparator prisons, HMP Leicester was the third lowest for use of force in 2022.

Use of the safe cell: see section 5.2.3.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The number of intelligence reports raised during the reporting year (5,289) is lower than it has been in the past. For all individuals entering the prison, there is enhanced searching and scanning in place. Unfortunately, the X-ray property scanner associated with this project was subject to a lengthy delay due to a national procurement problem and only became operational in February 2023.

Intelligence-led searches have a good success rate. While finds of weapons have remained stable, there has been a substantial increase in the number of mobile phone finds, including many smartphones, which are more difficult to secrete.

| Finds | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Weapons | 55 | 32 | 38 |
| Mobile phones | 23 | 19 | 56 |

There were 1,567 body scans completed on prisoners in reception this year, either when they entered the prison or when there was suspicion that they were concealing items internally. Of these scans, 15% (235) were positive, invariably for organic matter such as drugs, and none for mobile phones, as it has become more difficult for prisoners to bring phones into the establishment by this route.

The number of packages found to have been thrown over the very high prison wall has increased from nine last year to 24 this year, many including mobile phones as well as drugs. There has also been at least one instance of phones being brought in by corrupt staff who have subsequently been dismissed and referred to the police for prosecution. Now that the new X-ray baggage scanner scans all staff and visitors' bags on entering the prison, this should reduce the number of unauthorised items previously brought in by this route.

The number of prisoners found under the influence of illegal substances has risen, notably in January 2023 when there were 23 such instances and 12 in-possession drug finds. There are concerns that this may relate to new forms of spice (synthetic cannabinoid) available in liquid form, which may be more difficult to detect.

| Drugs | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Prisoners under the influence | 133 | 99 | 28 | 74 |
| In-possession drug finds | 85 | 58 | 39 | 62 |

The trace detection equipment detected only 11 mailed-in items of drug-impregnated paper, usually new psychoactive substances (NPS) compared with 14 items in 2021 and 125 in 2019, which is the year that the technology was introduced. There were five detected attempts by visitors to pass unauthorised items to prisoners in the visits room.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1. Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 Accommodation and clothing

The standard of cleanliness on the wings is usually acceptable. Some of the cells require refurbishment and redecoration. A programme of improvements to individual cells commenced in April using both local Amey staff and prisoners, taking two cells offline at a time and starting with the subterranean Parsons unit. However, in the autumn with prison numbers rising and the requirement to use every available space, this programme stopped, leaving a large number of cells still needing improvement. Individual secure lockers have been installed in each cell for prisoners to store personal items. Despite new boilers and an overhaul of the heating system in 2021, some cells still remain cold.

Washing machines and dryers have been installed on each of the landings to enable prisoners to launder their own clothes and this is a welcome improvement. A system of decency checks has been introduced to ensure that each cell has the required fittings and equipment. However, there is a constant need to ensure that items are not hoarded and that each man has sufficient clothing and bedding. There is a particular problem with ensuring that each man has a duvet, which is important when the cells are cold, as there appears to be a shortage. In October, decency packs were introduced on a weekly basis to provide free toiletries for prisoners who did not have enough money to purchase items from the canteen.

5.1.2 Capital investment

The project to complete the fire safety and other alarm systems continues to run behind schedule and is not now expected to complete until 10 August 2023. Money has been found to refurbish the showers to bring them up to a decent standard. However, the prison building will continue to require significant capital expenditure because of its age and condition to ensure that the facilities provide an acceptable and decent environment. While considerable sums have been spent re-roofing some of the prison buildings in recent years, the same areas have been prone to significant flooding despite the work done. This is a particular problem for the gym where the upper floor and stairs have been out of action at times because of severe flooding, threatening the continued use of this vital facility.

5.1.3 Food

Throughout 2022, the kitchen staff continued to deliver food of a good standard, with a reasonable menu choice, despite rising costs of ingredients on a budget that has not increased with inflation. The servery is open at lunchtime, when breakfast packs are also issued, and for the hot evening meal. From October the lunch choices increased to six, including a hot option. In October, a food survey was issued to all prisoners, with 28 men responding. The comments seen in the report, available in the library, were mainly favourable and offered some constructive suggestions. The catering course has restarted, enabling learners to gain a range of skills. Course

members have prepared examples of their work to display at an employment fair in the prison where hospitality businesses were present.

For an extended period of time there were important pieces of catering equipment out of action, waiting for Amey to secure the necessary parts. However, at the end of the reporting period all equipment was working satisfactorily.

The kitchen continues to provide for a wide range of diets, with special meals created for a range of seasonal and religious festivals.

Recently men with prison jobs who reside in the below-ground Parsons unit have been provided with microwaves and other equipment to cook their own food, however, these facilities are not available elsewhere in the prison.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 Accommodation

The works to the flooring, the six cells and the showers completed during 2020 have greatly improved the decency and safety of the care and separation unit (CSU). All six cell windows have been replaced, and adjudications moved to a more spacious room with good ventilation. There are regular fabric checks and remedial actions for cell damage.

5.2.2 Population

In 2022, there were 133 episodes of segregation involving 94 prisoners, compared with 209 episodes and 135 prisoners in 2021. A few of these men were held, typically overnight, under the secretions policy introduced after the X-ray body scanner in reception became operational from December 2020. They were transferred to normal location when their scan proved negative.

In 2022, five prisoners were held for more than 42 days, compared with four in 2021. It was of concern to the Board that four prisoners with poor mental health who were awaiting transfer to secure hospital accommodation (6.3.1) were of necessity accommodated in the CSU, for safety and social care reasons, and held there for 21, 40, 41, and 81 days respectively.

A number of segregated prisoners exhibited particularly challenging disruptive behaviour, with repeated episodes of vandalism, threats, assault and dirty protest, as well as self-harm. However, prisoners were treated respectfully regardless of their behaviour, and the Board had occasion again to commend the resilience of the staff caring for them. Formal support sessions with a psychologist for CSU staff have continued.

Quarterly meetings of the segregation monitoring and review group continued, and data including equalities disproportionality was presented and properly scrutinised. There was effective follow-up, with investigation and action as required. Segregated prisoners were also discussed at the weekly SIM, and effective multidisciplinary case reviews were held for challenging prisoners.

5.2.3 The safe cell

In 2022, the safe cell was used on three occasions of short duration to defuse violent or aggressive behaviour or to prevent serious self-harm, compared with two occasions in 2021.

5.2.4 Adjudications

A total of 826 charges was laid in 2022 and the number proven was 458, compared with 2021, when 827 charges were laid and 586 proven. The most frequent charge was 'disobeys a lawful order' (224 instances), which was usually refusal to share a cell or to transfer to another establishment. There were 205 charges for being in possession of an unauthorised article, 95 for damage and 72 for threatening/abusive behaviour.

The independent adjudicator was available for remote hearings, but during 2022 only four charges led to a punishment of added days – a total of 72 added days were awarded throughout the year. In 2021, 26 charges led to a punishment of added days, to a total of 420 days awarded.

The Board did not have the capacity to attend more than a few adjudications during 2022 but received the minutes of the quarterly adjudication standardisation meetings, and attended in person when able. There was proper scrutiny and interrogation of the data, analysis of trends and equalities, and quality assurance checks of paperwork and processes, and feedback and guidance were offered to individual staff as necessary.

5.2.5 Referral to the police

In 2022, 37 charges were referred to the police for crimes committed in prison, compared with 46 in 2021. At the end of the year, 18 had been completed and the remainder were still with the police. Of those completed, 11 were rejected, five as being not in the public interest, three for not enough evidence and three because the victim refused to cooperate. Six cases were accepted and investigations are ongoing, and one was accepted and referred to the Crown Prosecution Service.

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key work

5.3.1 Staff-prisoner relationships

The very good supportive and constructive interactions between staff and prisoners consistently highlighted in IMB Leicester annual reports remains a strength of the establishment. The recent HMI Prisons survey found that 77% of prisoners said that staff treated them with respect and 78% that there were staff that they could turn to if they had a problem. The Board observed many instances of good staff-prisoner engagement and good humour. There is a regular weekly newsletter for prisoners, and a prisoner council commenced in October as a forum for sharing information and hearing suggestions from the seven prisoner representatives, though these arrangements have yet to become embedded.

5.3.2 Availability of prison officer and operational support grades

At the beginning of the year, with a reduced prisoner population, the staffing situation was reasonably settled with nearly a full complement of staff. However, about half of

the prison officer grades had not worked in a prison before lockdown and were having to learn how to operate with a less restrictive regime. Unfortunately, during the spring and summer a number of officers left for a variety of reasons, including finding better paid jobs elsewhere. Recruitment was slow and did not keep up with the number of staff leaving. By July there were 72 prison officer grades available for duty against a required complement of 108, which restricted the regime available, including key working.

In October, there were 16 new officers in training, but therefore not available for active duty. There was also a shortfall of nine operational support grades (OSGs). The regime continued to be restricted at times. The new pay settlement appears to have reduced the number of officers leaving, but at the end of the year approximately half of band 3 prison officers had yet to complete their apprenticeship, and the lack of experienced staff showed at times in how prisoners were managed.

During the course of the year, the turnover rate of prison officers was approximately 30% (32 out of 108), and for OSGs was 45% (14 out of 31). At the end of the year there was a full complement of OSGs and prison officers. When all have completed their training, the prison should be in a much better staffing position and be able to operate a full regime consistently. Thirty-three staff have volunteered for the buddy scheme to support inexperienced staff.

5.3.3 Key working

Prisoners should have regular meetings with an allocated key worker to address their immediate needs and future plans; this is an important part of their rehabilitation. Five rooms were redecorated and furnished for this purpose this year. In March 2022, 41% of key working was delivered and this was maintained at about this level until June, from when it declined sharply, so that from August to October no key working was delivered, due to shortage of staff. A request from the Governor for a bonus scheme to pay staff for additional hours to do this important work was turned down by the regional prison director.

While this work restarted on a small scale in December, with a core group of trained officers focusing on 21- to 24-year-old prisoners, at the suggestion of the young prisoners' forum, it has to date only reached 22% of expected hours delivered. As staffing levels increase, the numbers of hours delivered should improve, but it has a long way to go to reach the 80% completion target, and many of the newer staff will require refresher training to undertake this work.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including nationality and ethnicity), religion or belief, and sexual orientation. A member of the senior management team is the named sponsor for each characteristic as it applies to staff and prisoners. The Board monitors whether prisoners with any of these characteristics suffer disadvantages.

HMP Leicester continues to hold a diverse population, with typically 17 ethnic groups represented. When comparing ethnicity, the population is majority white. In 2022-2023 on average over 67% of the population self-declared as white:

English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern and Southern Irish/British/Gypsy/Irish Traveller. Most of those identifying as 'white other' come from Albania.

The distribution of the population by age has remained almost static, with the most common age bracket being 30-39 years of age, which was 38% of the population. Younger prisoners aged 21- 24 accounted for 13% of the prison population and just 2% of the population were aged 60 years and over.

Overall, the population of foreign nationals, on average 21%, was consistently lower in 2022-2023 than 2021-2022. There was a large spike in 2022 between June and August when the population jumped from 59 to 81 foreign nationals. Over the past two years, HMP Leicester has held 41 different nationalities, with Albanians accounting for 40% of the foreign national population.

Equalities data is now considered in most department meetings to improve the monitoring of prisoner outcomes, and any disproportionality investigated. Self-declared rates of disability were significantly higher in 2022-2023, as recording practices improved, with prisoners giving consent to share data held by healthcare on neurodiverse conditions, such as autism and ADHD, combined with a greater sharing of information on learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Mental health and learning difficulties (including dyslexia) are identified as significant disabilities in this prison.

In the period December 2022-February 2023, the use of force was disproportionately higher for those aged 25-29 years. Prisoners with disabilities were more likely to be subject to adjudications between October 2022 and February 2023. The prison is monitoring these trends and considering the reason for any disproportionate outcomes.

There were nine meetings of different prisoner forums, including older and younger prisoners, foreign national prisoners, those with disabilities, and those who identify as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller. They discuss and improve equality and diversity on matters such as access to worship and the promotion of religious and cultural festivals and other celebrations, such as Black History Month.

The Board acknowledges that the collation of equalities data is far from straightforward. There is evidence that the prison is undertaking careful needs analysis across a number of disciplines to better improve the care and humane treatment of prisoners with protected characteristics. The lead for equalities is making progress in driving forward learning to better meet the needs of the diverse prison population through the equalities action team (EAT) meetings, which are well attended.

5.4.1. *Discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs)*

There were 42 DIRFs submitted in 2021-2022, which rose to 60 in 2022-2023. The increase can be attributed to the redirection of complaints forms submitted with the harassment/discrimination box checked, to be dealt with as a DIRF investigation rather than a complaint. The Board considers that this change to properly investigate complaints of discrimination is appropriate. Disability and race remain the most common areas of complaints of discrimination raised by prisoners. In 2022-2023, just 5% of complaints of discrimination were upheld compared with 31% in 2021-2022.

Monitoring of complaints of discrimination will be a priority for the IMB in the forthcoming year.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The prison chaplaincy has representation from 14 different faith groups. Over the year, an average of 32% of prisoners identified as Christian, 26% as Muslim and 25% as having no religion, with smaller numbers coming from other faith groups. The only group that does not currently have a chaplain from their faith is Rastafarian, where there is a national shortage of such chaplains.

At the beginning of the year, attendance at corporate worship was limited to a maximum of 20 prisoners due to Covid-19, but this restriction was lifted as the regime opened up. In addition to corporate worship, smaller study groups also operate supported by volunteers. The chaplaincy arranges for official prison visitors to meet with prisoners who otherwise would not receive social visits and would like such contact. At the end of the year, three such visitors were operating; numbers of visitors available have reduced since the Covid-19 lockdown.

The chaplaincy is well integrated with the prison regime, has started to attend the pre-release board and has produced a guide to resources available in the community. It facilitates the DistrACCTion group (4.2.2) and Facing up to Conflict' (4.3). Virtual attendance at funerals and where relatives are undergoing end-of-life care has been facilitated for prisoners who are unable to attend, via use of an iPad.

5.6 Incentives scheme

Quarterly incentives forums were held with prisoners to review the operation of the incentives scheme. Those prisoners who behave well can achieve enhanced status and earn extra privileges, such as extra gym sessions at the weekend and more evening social visits, and can have a games console which plays DVDs. Those prisoners whose behaviour deteriorates are downgraded from standard to basic and lose their access to in-cell television.

As a result of the review, the policy was rewritten so that prisoners could achieve enhanced status after four rather than 12 weeks, which was seen as significant, as most sentenced prisoners do not stay at Leicester prison for long. However, this change in policy has had little effect as the proportion of prisoners who have enhanced status has remained stable at 20.5%. The proportion of prisoners on the basic level has increased from 2.3% at the beginning of the year to 6.7% at the end. One reason for this is that prisoners who refuse to share a cell are downgraded, as there is pressure to maintain a high level of sharing due to the current pressure on prison places.

5.7 Complaints

There were more formal complaints to the establishment in 2022 than in 2021, with an increase in both first complaint (Comp1) and appeal (Comp1A) forms submitted. However, one prisoner submitted 22 complaints, and another 47.

The complaints team was energetic, and 99 of responses were returned within the allowed timescale. Prisoners were encouraged to speak to wing staff or to use the general landing application process first, so that issues could be resolved promptly.

| Complaints | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| COMP 1 | 677 | 478 | 624 |
| COMP 1A | 58 | 47 | 70 |
| Property | 85 | 81 | 155 |
| Residential | | 98 | 155 |
| Finance | 77 | 48 | 75 |
| Staff | 72 | 61 | 57 |

The Board has occasion to inspect complaints paperwork when IMB applications are being investigated and can confirm that the quality of replies from the establishment has generally been good.

In addition, during 2022, the Board conducted an audit of complaints. A random sample of 50 cases was reviewed. Most responses were good, with a clear explanation of the investigation that had been done and of the outcome, and an apology if warranted. Three were unsatisfactory, and the business manager gave constructive feedback to the responder.

The complaints department conducted two surveys of prisoner experience of the complaints process in 2022. Every prisoner received a form. Eight completed forms were returned in April and 14 in October. In total, six respondents were satisfied with the system. The comments of the remainder were fully investigated, but no serious issues were found.

5.8 Property

Of the 155 complaints to the establishment about property, 52 were related to transfer from another establishment, with 15 prisons cited. Sixteen of these complaints were upheld, and four partially upheld. One hundred and three related to property within the establishment, including alleged loss, usually on cell clearance or move, or damage or were regarding clothing parcels. Twenty-three were upheld and 11 partially upheld.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Healthcare continues to be provided by the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Substance misuse services are fully integrated. At the end of the year, there were 32 NHS-employed healthcare staff in post, with a head of healthcare and three clinical matrons responsible for primary care (physical health), mental health and SMS. There were 15 staff vacancies, with significant gaps in the numbers of permanent mental health nurses and pharmacy technicians; most of the vacancies were covered by agency staff. The service is supported by GPs from Inclusion Healthcare and by visiting specialists.

From 1 March 2022, the main medication hatch moved to a more discrete location. The new system of medication administration was a big improvement, with fewer prisoners congregating, thereby avoiding potential flashpoints and with fewer staff required to supervise the queue.

The majority of applications to healthcare relate to failing mental health or skin problems – having to live in the oppressive and often poorly maintained environment is not conducive to good health. Although the Board received 16 applications relating to healthcare, three were simple requests for information, six were disagreements with decisions by clinicians regarding medication, and five issues would be resolved by an imminent appointment.

6.2 Physical healthcare

At the beginning of the year, HMP Leicester was designated a Covid-19 outbreak site by the UK Health Security Agency due to the rising numbers of positive cases through internal transmission. This continued for several weeks with the prison eventually emerging from most Covid-19 restrictions by the end of May. Healthcare services resumed full operations without any restrictions from September.

Subcontracted services include dentist, optician, sexual health team, podiatry and physiotherapy. The waiting list for routine dentistry is approximately three weeks and most GP appointments are arranged within seven days. Attendance at appointments was above 85% on most days. A full vaccination service is available, including Covid-19 vaccination, and prisoners have been repeatedly encouraged to take this up given the vulnerability of the population. In March, the Hepatitis C Trust carried out a HITT (high intensity test and treat) for healthcare patients, offering to test as many as possible.

Healthcare work on the wings included providing reception screening interviews, attendance at ACCT reviews, same day reviews following the use of force, and attending self-harming prisoners and those who developed acute medical problems. For a variety of medical health issues during 2022, there were 79 attendances at the accident and emergency department, and seven prisoners were on bed watch for a total of 21 days and nights.

6.3 Mental health

Mental healthcare provision remained good during the reporting year. Mental health nurses had full involvement with reception, casework and properly timetabled ACCT

reviews. Between 30 and 50 per cent of all new arrivals were referred to the MH team following their reception health screening, and the active caseload is about 90 men. The appointed psychiatrist continued to attend one whole day a week, sometimes assisted by a specialist trainee, and continuity of care was good. The psychological wellbeing practitioner continued to support men suffering low-level mental ill health.

6.3.1 *The gatekeeping process*

This is the system by which prisoners with serious mental illness are transferred to secure psychiatric accommodation under a section of the Mental Health Act. The IMPACT team for secure services in the East and West Midlands continued to work effectively, and the referral system and assessment process was good. However, there are still insufficient places in the national secure estate.

During 2022, nine prisoners were managed in the gatekeeping system, and eight were transferred, compared with 15 during 2021. One non-urgent prisoner waited seven months for a scarce place in a specialist rehabilitative unit. For the remainder, the average time interval between first referral and assessment by secure unit staff was 13 days (range 1-26), compared with 13 days (range 1- 34) in 2021.

The average time spent by prisoners accepted and waiting for transfer was 42 days (range 14 -96, median 28 days), compared with 18 days (range 4- 37) for 13 of the men in 2021. That year there were in addition two men held for 65 and 77 days respectively. One prisoner referred at the end of 2022 was still at HMP Leicester 43 days after being accepted by a secure unit.

It was of particular concern to the Board that four of these eight prisoners were necessarily segregated for safety and social care reasons, for 21, 40, 41, and 81 days respectively. Although staff did their best to care for them, and they were seen daily by the mental health team and weekly by adult social care, this was a situation outside the control of the establishment that could be regarded as inhumane treatment.

6.3.2 *Critical time intervention*

This valuable initiative has continued. Some men become well known to the establishment through repeated cycles of release and reoffending ('revolving door' prisoners), often the result of complex health needs and disorganised behaviour. Two mental health practitioners identify these vulnerable individuals and, during the six weeks before release, network with the resettlement services so that through-the-gate support is in place on the day of release and continues afterwards for up to six weeks. Referrals to the team numbered 82 during 2022, and 53 men engaged with the system and were supported.

6.4 Social care

The Leicester City Council-funded trained care assistant continued in post and provided rapid assessment and response for prisoners with physical disabilities. During 2022, 16 referrals were made for assessment, and seven men received a social care package.

6.5 Exercise, regime

6.5.1 Regime

Along with other prisons, Leicester moved out of the stage 2 Covid regime on 22 March 2022. From then on, the regime gradually opened up and moved to a 'new normal' situation, which is now fairly similar to how things were pre-Covid-19. The number of positive Covid cases averaged three between February and May, rising to 22 in June when there was an outbreak identified via mass testing, which was managed by use of a short-term isolation unit. Since then, there has been only one identified case in July and six in November.

While remand prisoners do not have to engage in work or activities, all prisoners who are working or attending activities get three hours a day out of cell to attend these Monday to Thursday, along with a two-hour domestic session where they can shower, exercise or go to the gym. Those who did not attend either work or activities had approximately two and a half hours out of cell on weekdays to complete their domestic activities. Kitchen workers could be out of cell for seven hours a day. HMI Prisons found that 34% of prisoners were locked up during the core working day, and only 23% were engaged in purposeful activities.

At weekends there is less activity and prisoners get three and a half hours out of cell each day for showers, gym and exercise. However, between October and December the weekend regime was restricted on seven occasions. On three occasions this was on both Saturday and Sunday and time out of cell was limited to one and a half hours due to staff shortages. On a further four weekends this happened on either Saturday or Sunday.

6.5.2 Exercise and gym

All prisoners can get an hour's exercise in the open air each day, either in the main exercise yard or the Welford unit exercise yard for vulnerable prisoners. Winter coats were provided for prisoners without these should they wish to wear one. Some weights and gym equipment is provided on the exercise yard, supervised by a member of gym staff. The surface of the main exercise yard has deteriorated, is no longer safe for playing team games and requires replacement.

There were four physical education instructors (PEIs) covering the gym and activities on the main exercise yard. The gym was very popular and heavily used. Groups of up to 20 men could be allocated to each session, but these numbers were often exceeded. Main wing prisoners could attend up to seven sessions per week, and vulnerable prisoners four. Those in the care and separation unit could attend for an hour on Friday mornings.

As it is popular, some of the gym equipment is aging and worn, and a programme of replacement is needed to ensure that sufficient safe equipment is available. The leaking roof and bowing floor also need attention to ensure the viability of this important asset.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Support for prisoners with addiction problems on reception into HMP Leicester was good. The separate 29-bed my recovery unit (MRU) was operating earlier in the year and was closed in the spring to allow for the installation of the new fire detection

system. Prisoners were consulted about what they would want to see on the unit prior to its reopening in September. While individuals receive substitute prescribing and individual sessions with the substance misuse staff from Nottinghamshire Health Care, the psychosocial interventions that were promised under the contract have amounted to just one session being delivered to date.

There is an increasing problem with illegal drug misuse in HMP Leicester. The percentage of failed random drug tests increased recently from 12% to approaching 30%. The recovery unit is supposed to operate as a therapeutic environment with men receiving 28 days' treatment before returning to the main wing. This was not happening. There have been vacancies amongst substance misuse staff, and there is no agreement between the treatment providers and the prison about where therapeutic group work should take place.

6.7 Soft skills

Following consultation with prisoner representatives at the prison council, the first prisoner wellbeing day was held in the chapel in December. At the same time, yoga sessions were introduced in the upstairs gym - two sessions on Thursday each week and one on Friday morning - which initially proved popular.

Prisoners and staff have been involved in various fundraising activities during the year. Together they sourced and sent 20 boxes of books to prisoners in Guyana in conjunction with a University of Leicester project. Muslim prisoners raised £720 which was sent to Islamic Relief to help those in need of humanitarian assistance following the devastating floods that had hit Pakistan in August.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 Education

The education department is staffed by an enthusiastic team from People Plus who aim to provide courses that suit the needs of the prison population.

The education department provides a morning session with 56 spaces and an afternoon session with 48 spaces, Monday to Thursday, and a morning session on Friday. Men have the opportunity for in-cell learning for most of the courses provided.

On arrival at the prison everyone is expected and encouraged to have an education induction session provided by the information, advice and guidance (IAG) team to assess educational achievements and requirements for work, both in prison and on release, and to prepare personal learning plans.

Since the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, the average attendance of those allocated to education has been approximately 65%, which is below target, achieving an attendance rate of about 50% of capacity. A significant factor influencing this relatively low attendance figure is the high proportion of men who are on remand and are not required to attend education.

Completion of courses is frequently outside the control of HMP Leicester as there is a requirement to transfer men to other prisons. This results in approximately 19% of men not completing the courses they started.

Approximately 95% of those taking courses in both maths and English achieved qualifications, which is higher than the target rate. Similarly, the achievement rates for accredited courses such as cleaning, catering and construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) card exceeded 90%, again above target.

With 22% of the prison population being foreign nationals, there has been good provision of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Many students have progressed to mainstream English classes, and one exceptional student progressed from ESOL learner to GCSE standard in both English and maths.

7.1.2 Library

The library is well-used and appreciated by many prisoners; it is open from Monday to Thursday for morning and afternoon sessions and can be used by 10 prisoners at a time. The library has a complement of three part-time staff; however, for much of the year only two have been available who have ensured an uninterrupted service. The library budget has decreased in recent years from £8,000 to £3,000, which has restricted the replenishment and refreshment rate, and reduced the period books can be lent from three to two weeks. The majority of books are returned on time, with a loss or damage rate of about 5%. If budget and staff were available, additional opening on a Saturday would be welcomed.

The range of available books is generally sufficient to meet demand. However, although foreign language books are available, a significant exception is that due to unavailability in both Leicester and other libraries there are almost none in the Albanian language to meet the demand from the significant number of Albanian prisoners who speak minimal English. Approximately 280 DVDs are available for loan, of which around 80 feature Bollywood films and are very popular.

In previous years, Storybook Dads has been popular; however, the volunteers were unable to provide this service during Covid-19 restrictions and no volunteers have returned to provide it. The Shannon Trust reading programme did not resume in 2022.

The library enabled prisoners to take part in two challenge events organised by Leicester City Libraries; the challenge was to read six books within six weeks and a total of 70 men were pleased to have the opportunity to take part.

There has been no writer in residence during the year, but his red, green and blue ToolBox books produced in 2021 have remained available and continue to prove popular distraction activities.

For two years there has been a break in the IT cabling stopping connectivity between the prison and Leicester City Library, meaning that the electronic catalogue has not been accessible, restricting the number of books that can be acquired and lent out. This has now finally been resolved. It is positive that the virtual campus is now installed in both the library and education, widening access to learning resources.

7.2 Vocational training, work

During the year, the employment strategy was revised, a New Futures Network prison employment lead was appointed and an employment hub established. These are positive developments that aim to prepare prisoners for suitable available work offered by local employers.

Vocational courses provide pathways to potential employment in the Leicester and Leicestershire areas in construction, hospitality and catering, warehousing and logistics, cleaning services and self-employment. Subject to men achieving the minimum education qualification level for employment within the prison, there are 40 workplaces available, mostly morning or afternoon, for about half the men in areas such as the kitchen, cleaning, painting, orderlies and the workshop.

There are complementary vocational education courses in peer mentoring, in which 46 men achieved a qualification, and manual handling in which 180 men gained a level 2 qualification. The CSCS qualification awarded by GQA was achieved by 37 men, and 10 men completed and gained City and Guilds NVQ level 1 in food preparation and level 2 in food safety. These qualifications should help men to find work outside, and two of these men are now employed in catering following release. Towards the end of the year, a traffic management course run by Keilty Ltd and Up to Speed resulted in 16 men gaining a traffic management qualification.

The number of workplaces available in the prison is restricted due to lack of space. One workshop previously used for training men in building trades/handyman skills is

not in use due to difficulty securing a tutor. Another workshop with a capacity for 15 men has on average seen only five men attending, where the unskilled activity assembling games offered no opportunity to learn skills or maintain interest. Another company has provided employment opportunities for work involving deconstructing parts for recycling; this also is unlikely to motivate the men. The overall provision of workshop activity has been insufficient.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The offender management unit (OMU) is staffed by 6.5 equivalent prison offender managers (POMs), a combination of probation and prison officers, managed by a senior probation officer. There are eight administrative caseworkers and a band 4 specialist case administrator. The POMs continue to provide an OMU internal duty line service to answer prisoners' queries, as well as conducting face-to-face work.

HMP Leicester is designated as a local prison with a 55% reception and a 45% resettlement function. Reception prisoners are those awaiting court, either on remand or convicted awaiting sentence. Throughout 2022, the backlog of court cases has continued to grow. By the end of the year, reception prisoners formed 64% of the population. Waiting times were particularly long for crown court hearings. At the end of January 2023, delays for 66 men currently on remand had exceeded the new higher custody time limit of 238 days. This compares with just 12 men experiencing such extensive delays in October 2021, which require further court authorisation.

Although sentenced men were transferred out promptly, there remained insufficient places for the local resettlement function, and a sizeable number of Leicester men were transferred to HMP Lincoln and released from there, some shortly prior to their release date, disrupting their education and planning for release. Twenty-three men were released on home detention curfew (HDC) during 2022. However, many experienced delays in their release due to difficulties in obtaining suitable, verified accommodation.

7.4 Family contact

Due to Covid-19, the availability of social visits was restricted to a maximum of 10 prisoners per session at the start of 2022. However, 523 visits were nevertheless facilitated between January and March. From April the number of men allowed on each session increased incrementally to 23 by January 2023. Visits are now available each afternoon, except for Friday, and on three evenings, with both morning and afternoon sessions on Saturday and Sunday. This provides options for families and friends to visit and is sufficient to meet demand, with a take-up of around 100 visits per week.

Video visits were provided by Purple Visits until March 2022, and subsequently by Prison Video, currently having availability for 15 sessions each day except for Friday, when nine are available. This is sufficient to meet demand as take-up has typically been between 50 and 60% of available slots.

In September, a families and significant others strategy was published, which recognises the importance of maintaining good family ties in assisting rehabilitation

in the community. A very active Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust) family engagement worker who promoted family contact was available until September 2022. However, with the introduction of a new contract in October, staff availability has reduced, limiting the extent of their activities. These should include greeting and supporting visiting families in the Gateway visitors' centre and serving refreshments. The visitors' centre includes a barista-style café but, pending completion of fire safety works and with the unavailability of either prison or Pact staff, it has only been possible to provide basic snacks.

Prisoners who have few visitors can exchange a visiting order for PIN phone credit enabling them to maintain outside contacts.

Two family days were successfully held with 10 men taking part in an event in September with a back-to-school theme, and 12 men took part in the December event with a Christmas theme. The positive feedback received from both events is illustrated by the comment:

'For me, it was that I could get close to my family and have a proper interaction as it felt normal'.

7.5 Resettlement planning

Towards the end of the year, a reducing reoffending strategy was published which sets out areas for strategic development, as well as interventions for each of the seven pathways for reducing reoffending. A rehabilitative culture strategy was also published which emphasises the importance of a total prison commitment to a rehabilitative environment from initial induction through to release. Monthly reducing reoffending meetings have addressed issues on each of the seven pathways.

The pre-release team, comprising 2.6 probation service officers, are very experienced and effective in their role of identifying resettlement needs. They assess and address immediate needs, for example in relation to securing the continuation of tenancies and housing benefit payments. On release, men in need are provided with a release pack consisting of a rucksack containing basic toiletries and contact details of relevant resources, as well as a mobile phone if needed.

While awaiting the award of a commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) contract for finance, benefits and debt advice, the team has undertaken some of this work and sent letters to creditors on behalf of at least 140 men, some of whom had multiple debts of more than £2,000 each. Until the arrival of an ID and banking administrator in January 2023, the team also assisted by providing basic ID. The new appointee is now addressing a previously largely unmet need, assisting with obtaining birth certificates and opening bank accounts.

A monthly delivery board operates 12 weeks prior to release to ensure men's identified concerns are addressed and referrals made to relevant interventions. At four weeks prior to release, men are invited to a pre-release board where arrangements for addressing their resettlement needs are explained and discussed. Since October, a two-and-a-half-day pre-release course has been offered providing advice on housing, benefits and employment; it also includes a day devoted to yoga

and mindfulness sessions and mental health. On the last day of the course, men are introduced to the discharge lounge facilities in Leicester provided by the Shaw Trust.

Since September, the discharge lounge has provided a welcoming environment and a range of support services to men released on licence. By the end of January, 32 referrals had been made directly from the prison, of which 28 were taken up by the men. Three men who positively engaged with this service are now training to becoming mentors for other released prisoners.

Where men are identified as potentially homeless on release, the pre-release team contacts the community offender manager for them to make a referral 12 weeks prior to release to the relevant local authority, Nacro and The Bridge. This enables prioritisation of relevant referrals to accommodation providers according to needs and assessed risk. However, during the period April 2022 to January 2023, only about 60% of men had accommodation on the first night following release.

During this same period, less than 10% of men found employment within six weeks of release, which is below the current 15% target. The lack of accommodation has had a negative impact on men obtaining employment.

A significant number of men are released directly from court, for example as a result of being found not guilty or having already served the time for which they were sentenced. Any of these men who are potentially homeless will not have received assistance from the pre-release team. The proportion of men previously on remand who are released homeless from court is unknown but is likely to be significant.

The employment hub, open Monday to Friday, advertises job opportunities and is well used. Computer facilities are now available for writing CVs and for private study. In partnership with New Futures Network, a three-day hospitality event in October involved Marriott Hotels, Brockleby's Foods and Greene King. Catering for this event was provided by men from the training kitchen. In December, the theme of an event was wellbeing, and was attended by RMS and GXO Logistics, and in January the theme was unlocking construction, which involved Kieley.

The opportunity to work is dependent on released men having settled accommodation. Following the hospitality event, one man was offered a work trial. Unfortunately, he had no accommodation to go to and returned to prison. Three men who gained the traffic management qualification had a job offer, but were unable to take this up as they lacked settled accommodation. An employer advisory board chaired by a local employer will now address how external agencies can support the related needs of housing and employment.

The work of the IMB

During 2022, the Board provided face-to-face monitoring and a rota visit at least weekly, and Board meetings were held monthly. Three members left the Board, after one, three and six years' service respectively. Two members successfully completed the new member training course. A recruitment campaign was held in April and attracted nine applicants, of whom four were appointed. The Board completed the triennial review process.

Members continue to be made welcome in the establishment, and prisoner contact is readily facilitated. Members attended a sample of establishment meetings during the year, including the daily briefing, safer custody, safety intervention meetings, reducing reoffending, segregation monitoring and review group, adjudication monitoring group and use of force. The Board has also continued to receive the daily briefing sheet, prisoner and staff newsletters, notices to staff and prisoners, and the minutes of key departmental meetings.

Pre-Board meeting training sessions included the review of national and local IMB guidelines and policies, and invited speakers included the equalities officer, the family engagement (Pact) worker and a retired prison governor.

Board statistics

| | 2021 | 2022 |
|--|------|------|
| Recommended complement of Board members | 12 | 12 |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period | 9 | 9 |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period | 9 | 10 |
| Total number of visits to the establishment | 159 | 175 |

Applications to the IMB (including via the 0800 telephone line)

Application boxes are situated in the Welford unit, induction unit, CSU, Parsons unit, MRU and beside the servery on the main wing.

During the reporting year the boxes were opened, usually weekly, by an attending member.

| Code | Subject | Previous reporting year | Current reporting year |
|------|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| A | Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions | 5 | 6 |
| B | Discipline, including adjudications, incentives sanctions | 4 | 6 |
| C | Equality | 0 | 2 |
| D | Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell | 2 | 1 |
| E1 | Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions | 6 | 5 |
| E2 | Finance, including pay, private monies, spends | 1 | 5 |
| F | Food and kitchens | 0 | 2 |
| G | Health, including physical, mental, social care | 11 | 16 |
| H1 | Property within this establishment | 3 | 3 |
| H2 | Property during transfer or in another establishment or location | 2 | 2 |
| H3 | Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s) | 4 | 1 |
| I | Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation | 2 | 8 |
| J | Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying | 9 | 9 |
| K | Transfers | 3 | 1 |
| L | Miscellaneous, including complaints system | 3 | 5 |
| | Total number of applications | 55 | 72 |

The issue had already been resolved when the IMB contacted the prisoner in 20 cases, and five prisoners had left the establishment. During 2022, four prisoners used the national 0800 IMB applications line.



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